

What is desertification

- Desertification is when a dry region of land becomes dryer over time
- The region becomes void of life and plants
- Bodies of water become smaller
- The definition of desertification is "the process of fertile land transforming into desert typically as a result of deforestation, drought or improper/inappropriate agriculture"
- In drylands, water scarcity limits the production of crops, forage, wood, and other services ecosystems provide to humans. Drylands are therefore highly vulnerable to increases in human pressures and climatic variability, especially sub-Saharan and Central Asian drylands.

Causes of desertification

- There are a number of causes for desertification
- The main cause is removal of vegetation
- Overgrazing was not as large of a problem long ago because animals would move in response to rainfall. People would move with the animals so it prevented overgrazing in such areas. Now, we have a steady food supply so we do not have to move about. Now we use fences to keep animals where they are
- Farming of average land is causing desertification worldwide. Farmers are clearing average land, and using it which takes away the richness in the soil. The farmers need to wait for the land to replenish itself or grow crops that can replenish the soil.
- Destruction of plants in dry regions is causing desertification to occur. People are cutting down trees to use them as a source of fuel. Once all these trees are cut down there is nothing to protect the soil. This causes the soil to turn to dust and then blow away
- Incorrect Irrigation in dry regions causes a buildup of salt in the soil. Incorrect irrigation is more common in poorer areas. Farmers are using canal irrigation and other poor techniques because of the lack of water. This type of irrigation causes a buildup of salt in the soil

Areas affected by desertification

- Drylands occupy approximately 40–41% of Earth's land area
- home to more than 2 billion people
- It has been estimated that some 10–20% of drylands are already degraded
- the total area affected by desertification being between 6 and 12 million square kilometres
- billion people are under threat from further desertification

Preventions of desertification

- adopting sustainable agricultural practices drip irrigation is an example
- lack of funding to support land reclamation
- countries have developed Biodiversity Action Plans
- reforestation gets at one of the root causes of desertification
- in recent years there has been an increase in forest areas because of reforestation
- contour trenching this involves the digging of 150m long 1m deep trenches in the soil
- the trenches are made parallel to the height lines of the landscape
- preventing the water from flowing within the trenches and causing erosion

History of desertification

- deserts have been formed by natural processes interacting over long intervals of time
- deserts have grown and shrunk independent of human activities

- desertification has contributed to the collapse of several large empires, such as Carthage, Greece, and the Roman Empire, as well as causing displacement of local populations

Short Term Effects of Desertification

- Soil loses its nutrients which makes it not useful
- Land becomes salty which makes it difficult to grow crops

Long Term Effects of Desertification

- People die of starvation
- Animals die of starvation
- The soil becomes completely useless

<http://desertificationb.tripod.com/id3.html>

<http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desertification>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desertification>